

## California Courts News

### Title: Long Beach Design

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Here is the 6 acre site where the new Long Beach courthouse will be built, a block away from the old building.

A team from the private sector will soon be selected to finance, design, build, operate and maintain the 31 courtroom facility. The arrangement is called a performance based infrastructure, a partnership that's the first of its kind in the country.

Hon. Charles W. McCoy, Jr. Los Angeles Presiding Judge:

*"This is a very wise way to construct a courthouse in California."*

There's an evaluation panel of 6 people, mostly architects. They invited 3 finalist teams to describe their design and construction proposals.

The Balfour Beatty Capital group organized the building into 2 bars with an atrium between them. Their computer modeling pointed out the ideal solar orientation for efficient heating and cooling.

One prominent wall would be a unique composition of colored glass, reflecting their overarching theme of the city's relationship to water.

Nick Seierup Principal Building Designer: Perkins+Will, Balfour Beatty Capital:

*"This large scale surface wall is a wall that we're thematically referring to as the wave wall; it has a gentle curve to it. It's a series of different colored glass that are developing some very interesting special effects on the inside."*

There would be a formal traditional arrangement for courtrooms, with high volume courts in a prominent location. The 2-story podium base of the building would have a landscaped roof. Improved sidewalks and streetscape would link the parking structure to the court. Landscaping would feature drought tolerant Mediterranean plantings, including a palm court.

The California Judicial Partners presented a low-rise scheme, in keeping with the walk-ability they say Long Beach is trying to achieve.

Jose Palacios, Project Designer: AECOM; California Judicial Partners

*"The architecture really isn't something you start with and shoe horn the program and the technical aspects into it. It's the result."*

They propose a 4 story office bar and a 5 story court bar in an "L" shape, surrounding a large secure courtyard. They say they wanted a southern California feel, with open space right on the site – a place of calm and quiet.

High volume courts would be on the first two levels. All the courtrooms would be traditionally arranged with access to natural light.

Designers tried to blend the inside and the outside, with a comfortable environment for workers and visitors that includes a spacious lobby.

Andrew Cupples, Project Executive / Design AECOM; California Judicial Partners:

*"We looked at the lobby as a great room. We wanted to have a space that could breathe, that people could actually use."*

The jury assembly room on 4th floor would include an outdoor area.

Andrew Cupples, Project Executive / Design AECOM; California Judicial Partners:

*"We wanted a special place for the jury for people that actually come and do their civic duty, a pleasant area for them to be."*

The vision proposed by the Lankford Phelps group was to create what they call "a complete urban experience."

Ernest Cirangle, Design Principal, HOK; Lankford Phelps:

*"Architecturally we felt it was important to have a character that was both recalling some classic ideas of court and civic buildings."*

They incorporated the ideas of courthouse steps; a portico, interior colonnade, and a cornice overhang expressed with a modern flair. They say the solar orientation is perfect for a 6 story linear building like this one, and the light's just right.

Chuck Oraftik, Court Planner, HOK; Lankford Phelps:

*"There's a window wall right here which floods that with light and a window wall right along here which floods that with light."*

Their great hall, the atrium, is meant to inspire the idea of transparency. It is 48 feet wide by 120 feet high, with limestone walls, and wood added on the horizontal planes. High volume courts would be one level above and one level below the entry level. They plan to reuse grey water, and have a green roof.

David Herd, HOK; Lankford Phelps:

*"Collecting water from the green roof and the main roof, taking it down to a tank and then using that for irrigation."*

Chuck Oraftik, Court Planner, HOK; Lankford Phelps:

*"This area out here is a roof top terrace on top of the green roof; we provided an area where both public and staff for that matter can come out here and it's partly shaded."*

And there'd be a landscaped public plaza.

Each of the three proposals solved the challenges in different ways. But they share a common theme: blending the dignity of a traditional courthouse with modern, practical, and economical considerations.

Clifford Ham, Administrative Office of the Courts:

*"It's remarkable what the competition in the marketplace will bring to you if you ask them to do it and you reward them in that way. We're looking forward to the next step. It's comparing one to the next, and it's more than just the design and the construction; it's also the financial and the commercial terms and the facility management which comes later."*

The AOC will announce its selection in early March; groundbreaking should be about 6 months later. Construction should take about 28 months. Move-in is scheduled for the fall of 2012.

I'm Leanne Kozak reporting for California Courts News.

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